579 685 609 A quarrel broke out between Krasnichi and Shala. Shala had a besa with Krasnichi, but the Krasnichi had harried some Christian villages near Djakova which claimed descent from Shala. Shala therefore declared the besa ended and raided Krasnichi at night, stealing three mules. This caused complications, for Shala and Krasnichi do not border with each other. Krasnichi sent three headmen to Nikaj to accuse Nikaj of having sheltered and fed the mule-stealers on their way, and being thus party to the theft. The Nikaj men and three Krasnichi sat all day at the foot of the big wooden cross in front of the church and argued furiously—Nikaj loudly protesting ignorance and innocence of the whole affair and bidding Krasnichi to go to Shala.

Vexed with Shala for getting them into trouble thus, a day or two afterwards Nikaj went a-raiding to Shala and stole two fine horses. Shala sent delegates and complained that the theft was unfair. The horses were not Shala horses but belonged to guests—some Klimenti men who had come under besa to pasture some beasts. The horses were, therefore, under besa, too, and should not be touched. Nikaj only replied rudely: "You should not leave the horses of guests straying about." And my horse and Marko's were put at night into one of the church outbuildings to secure them from retort. The two horse-stealers, however, kindly offered to sell the horses to Shala for five hundred piastres apiece. Shala was enraged. The sitting lasted till late, and the debate was put off till to-morrow. But next day the Shala men and the horses had all disappeared in the night. The two horse-thieves came in hot indignation to the church house to ask the Franciscan's advice. They considered that in stealing their own horses back and going off with them Shala had played a dirty trick and acted most unfairly. The Franciscan, Marko, and I all shouted with laughter: "Bravo, Shala!" The two thieves were hurt. In all innocence they told of the great pains they had taken to steal the horses in the first place, and now they had been robbed. It was most unfair. Nor could the padre make them see it in another light; for to them robbery from a tribe with which there is no besa was rather a merit than a crime.

Nikaj argued that if Shala had the right to take back these horses, then Shala should restore the three mules taken from Krasnichi. A delegate came from Shala to debate this and to ask, "Are you in besa with Krasnichi? If so, we return the mules." As Nikaj was in blood with Krasnichi and only a day or two before had refused to have anything to do with the mule matter, Nikaj could not defend its proposition. Shala withdrew, leaving Nikaj furious and the poor horse-thieves much depressed.

609 579 Such raids, of course, easily start blood-feuds. The more civilized tribes and the intelligent headmen, who were increasing in number

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

and gradually reforming matters, were working towards punishing them in the same manner as theft within the tribe.

The fights between Montenegro and the Turks were usually brought about in this manner. The Montenegrins raided the Turkish borders, especially Herzegovina, till the Turks sent punitive expeditions. All sheep-stealers were considered heroes.

So far as my own experience goes I never had a thing stolen from me when among the Albanian tribes; they dealt honestly by me always.

FINES FOR OTHER MATTERS

In the case of rape the injured family may take blood; or it may compound for peace and accept about £30. The father of an illegitimate child must pay for its keep.

For killing a sheep or cattle a fine of about £2 to £3 per head.

For cutting wood in the forest of others, £2.

For stealing fruit, etc., according to value.

For putting a beast to graze on someone else's pasture, £2.

For putting beasts to graze on your own tribal pasture before the right season, £4.

(The sums given are only approximately taken at the then value of piastres.)

INHERITANCE

No land may be sold or bequeathed to a member of another tribe or any outsider.

The possessor of land can only sell it to his nearest male relative on his father's side.

Women cannot inherit land.

The house and such land as belongs to it is inherited by all a man's sons equally. As a matter of practice they continue living in it, and the eldest son is "zoti i shpis" (house-lord). I have seen a young man of twenty-eight years ordering his old uncles about in most peremptory manner. Expressing surprise at the way they obeyed, I was told: "They must—God has made him house-lord."

Failing sons, the property belongs equally to the nearest male relatives of the deceased, who usually would be his brothers. The eldest is then house-lord.

Should a man leave a wife who has had no children, she is of no account, and must leave the house and return to her father's house. Should she have a son under the age of fifteen she remains to mind the house till he inherits it. Till he is fifteen a guardian takes charge of his affairs. At fifteen he is of age and can carry arms. If the widow has

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

Skiperi would Our Lady of Scutari forgive her children, and return to her ancient shrine.

The scene on this day in the great square building, which, with its bare walls and absence of ornament, bears little resemblance to a Romish church, is most striking and strange. The mass performed on the occasion is listened to by a congregation whose waists are perfect arsenals, bristling with pistols and yataghans of every shape and pattern. There are wild-looking, fierce-moustachioed highlanders, white-kilted Mussulmans, chieftains blazing with gold embroidery, and milder citizens in more homely garb, all assembled in honour of the Madonna, before whose shrine their ancestors had worshipped. Yet, notwithstanding their participation in the religious rites of their neighbours, the Albanians are not less tenacious of their own honour than of that of the creed they profess, any insult offered to a Christian church being promptly retaliated upon a Moslem mosque, and *vice versâ*. Of this the following incident, which occurred about the middle of the century, offers a striking illustration.

A certain Tahir Mala, of Bugna, belonging to the Moslem tribe of the Gascii, having married his son to a maiden of the Christian Schialla, set out to bring the bride home, accompanied, according to national custom, by a numerous train, and preceded by the tribal banners. On the return journey, they stopped, as usual, every now and then to fire volleys into the air. Their way, however, lying past a Christian cemetery, the cross, standing in the midst, offered a mark for their pistols too tempting to be resisted, and was soon

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

riddled with balls. The tribe of the Schialla, having heard of this insult to their religion, prepared to take vengeance for it; but, the offenders being out of reach, they made the family of Bobi, to which the bride belonged, responsible. The Bobi engaged to obtain satisfaction within a week, or pay the penalty, and on the morrow the young men of the family set off for Bugna, where they killed two nephews of Tahir Mala. Not content, however, with this retribution, they entered the mosque, where they killed a pig, rubbed the doors with its blood, and placed the head on the ledge of the pulpit.

The Moslems, at this profanation of their mosque, hastened to complain to Mustapha Pasha, of Skodra, who prepared to send a military expedition against the Bobi. The latter, with the rest of the Schialla tribe, placed themselves under the protection of the Miridite Prince, Prenk Doda, who threatened the Pasha that, if troops were sent against the Schialla, he would not only support them, but call all the Christian highlanders to arms. The Pasha, alarmed at the prospect of a religious war for which he would be held responsible, then agreed to let the insulted cross atone for the polluted mosque, and cry quits with the Christians.

The number of Albanians affiliated to the Bektashi Order of Dervishes is said to be no fewer than 80,000. The lax observance of even the outward forms of Islam, characteristic of the followers of Hadji Bektash generally, is more especially observable in the conduct of the Skipetars, and has occasionally subjected them to persecution from their Osmanli Moslem neigh-

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THE BANDIT WHOM WE MET IN THE CAVE ABOVE THE LUMI SHALA AND WHO SANG US THE SONG OF DURGAT PASHA

A letter just received from Albania brings the news that he has cut his beard, hung his rifle on the wall (when disarming the mountaineers the Albanian government made an exception in his case), and is now running, with considerable success, a sawmill in the Mati.

[2240]

PEAKS OF SHALA

ooo the daylight. I, *I* in a bandit's cave! Such things didn't *happen;* they were only in books. So I said, meekly, timidly, quite inadequately, "Do you like—banditing?"

579 Yes, he said, he liked it very much. He became even poetic about it. I admit I took no notes of what he said. But I recall Rexh's voice repeating lyrical words about life on the mountains, camp fires and stars, freedom and fighting—the only life for a man, he declared. Once he had stopped being a bandit and gone back to the life of houses, but he was glad when the time came to be a bandit again.

I had not thought that being a bandit was a seasonal occupation, and I begged an explanation of these mysterious words. It developed that they referred to wars unknown and unrecorded save in the songs of the mountaineers, and we became so involved in references cryptic to me, but clear to the listening Albanians, that at last I was obliged to beg him to begin at the beginning and tell the straight story of his life. This he did, with the modest reluctance of a hero surrounded by admirers.

"I was not a rich man," he began, "but as our saying is, 'The smallest hair has its own shadow.' There were sheep in my house, and it was a house of two rooms, and the fields repaid our labor.. The tobacco box in my sash was never empty, and there was bread in the baking pan. There was a son in the cradle and another by the fire, and life was as smooth as the Lumi

7 [Albanian bandit [225] encountered on trail above Lumi Shala -- Analyst]

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGl Albania EGl

PEAKS OF SHALA

579 Shala in summer, until the coming of Durgat Pasha.

"After that came the treason of Essad Pasha, and, having then neither house, nor sheep, nor sons, nor tobacco, but only my rifle——"

We must interrupt, to bring him back to Durgat Pasha, and he was astonished that more than that name was needed to make us understand. Had we never heard the songs of Durgat 533 Pasha? Durgat Pasha, who in 1912 came from 539 the Sultan of Turkey to subdue the Sons of the Eagle? Durgat Pasha, who burned and killed, from the Mali Malines to the Malit Shkodra? He bent over the instrument on his knees, twanged three wild notes from it, and sang:

"Seven Powers had called a council,
Seven Powers met and said,
'Shqiperia is no more in our hands,
All Shqiperia is not in our hands.'
Then rose Durgat Pasha and took his gun.
'Leave this to me for three years.
O Sultan, I go for three years.
When I return the Shqiptars are yours.'
Durgat Pasha came past the white lake,
Durgat Pasha to the Mali Malines,
Durgat Pasha to the Mali Shoshit,
Durgat Pasha and five thousand soldiers.
He sends word to Hasjakupit,
'You shall send your rifle to me.
'Thirty Turkish pounds have I paid for my rifle,
Thirty pounds for my own rifle,
But I leave houses and lands and go with my rifle.
Thirty houses I leave behind me.'
These were the words of Hasjakupit.

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGl Albania EGl

ooo away, and a pale sunshine fell on Shoshi, which looked like a water-color picture in a gray frame. Our side of the valley was in shadow, but the rain had ceased and we should have been going on. I was held by a still unsatisfied curiosity about that bandit.

•579 "I thought bandits were highwaymen," I murmured, and, unwilling to ask interpreters to put the question that was in my mind, I laid the burden on my own lame knowledge of their language. "You kill Serbs?" I asked. "How do you get money?"

The whiskered face seemed to smile broadly at this boldness. "I get it on the trails," he said.

"From Albanians?"

"I get it where I can," he answered, indifferently. "The Austrians had money, and there were many Austrians in Albania. This rifle came into the mountains on an Austrian officer. I gave his clothes to a naked man of Dibra who was fighting the Serbs there. I got four Italian capes and trousers in one day, on the road north of Scutari, and there was money on their bodies, too. As to Albanians—there was a rich Albanian once, whom I met riding out from Ipek. Why should a man of Albanian blood ride in the eyes of the Serbs with gold in his pocket, while true Albanians are dying of cold and hunger? I took from him everything he had, and left him on the trail as naked as he came to the cradle. I said to him, 'You are the Sultan, and I am the Grand

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGl Albania EGl

Vizier. In your name I will give these things to your people, and they will be grateful.'"

We laughed hastily.

"But it is time to cut your beard and hang your rifle on the wall," Perolli suggested. "There is a free Albanian government now."

"But not a free Albania," said the bandit. "The government forgets that, and sits in council with the Powers that sold us to Italy and gave us to Serbia. Have you forgotten Kossova and a million of your brothers who are slaves to the Serbs?"

"I am of Ipek," Perolli answered him. "Nevertheless, I am first a Shqiptar and second a man of Kossova. And I remember our proverb that says, 'Better an egg to-day than a chicken next year.'"

"We have also a saying, 'Better the nightingale once than the blackbird every day,'" replied the bandit.

"Let it be. 'Every sheep hangs by her own leg,'" Perolli retorted, rising.

The honors were with him. For the moment, the bandit could think of no proverb which would be a weapon, and could only reply to our courteous farewells by wishing us smooth trails.

"The good man of yesterday becomes a burden to-day and a danger to-morrow," said Perolli, as we went slowly along the ledge of trail. "Why is it that our minds do not change as rapidly as the world changes around us? These mountain men will cling to their rifles, though the time is

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

Germans. I had been waiting for this opening and asked :

" Do you hold a reconciliation between the Partisans and Nationalist leaders like Abas Kupi to be possible ? "

" Yes, if they will fight the Germans as we do."

" Can they be persuaded to fight again ? "

" I fear there is only one way. If Zog will come to the radio and tell them to fight, then they will. You know that I have worked against him all my life, but I tell you now that he is the only man who can raise the Ghegs and so prevent civil war."

We finished talking towards midnight, when I took leave of Aqif and of my hosts ; for, unless I crossed the Drin before daybreak, I should be delayed on the west bank until the following night. The crossing was guarded by a gendarmerie post ; and the river was in spate. My obol, however, won the favour of the aged ferryman, who punted us over on a raft right under the nose of the sleeping gendarmes. A guide from Aziz Dino Hoja led the way beyond the river and I was followed by Kolaver, my personal bodyguard. This Kolaver was a lean and wolfish fellow, and a source of constant anxiety to my companions. He had started life as a brigand, but in the time of King Zog had turned gendarme, not indeed from any change of heart, but because he appreciated that, under a strong government, only the police can rob with impunity. When the Italians had invaded Albania he had returned to the mountains, judging that under their laxer rule it would be more profitable as well as more patriotic to pursue his calling after the manner of his youth. In those troubled times, however, brigandage proved a hard life ; and a solid if unusual interest in the King's restoration had led him to join Abas Kupi. He had attached himself to me during our progress through Mati, and at an early stage had been caught stealing in our camp. Abas Kupi had threatened him with death, but I had interceded on his behalf, because he was a gay rogue, and had saved him from his deserts by accepting responsibility for his future conduct. Thereafter he protected my belongings as if they had been the Holy Grail, and attended to my campaigning comforts with almost motherly devotion. Other people's

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

property, however, he continued to regard as fair game; but, though he sometimes boasted to me of his plundering expeditions, he was careful for my sake to honour the eleventh commandment.

Our guide seemed only casually acquainted with the district, and was besides terrified by rumours that a German patrol had been seen by the river earlier that night. Kolaver, however, encouraged him to find the path by alternately promising glittering rewards and jabbing him in the ribs with my submachine-gun. At last, after wandering for nearly four hours through rolling woods and meadows, we reached the house of Ramadan Kalloshi, where Maclean and Riddle were asleep.

Murad, the head of the powerful Kalloshi clan, had followed Zog into exile and lay in Istanbul, stricken with epilepsy. In his absence the leadership of the family was divided between his son, Ramadan, and his half brother, Myftar. In accordance with Dibran practice these two had proceeded to a division of labour: Ramadan pursued a pro-Allied policy, keeping in touch with the British missions, the Zogists, and the L.N.C., while Myftar sided with the Axis and led the government forces against the Macedonian Partisans. Ramadan was a dark young man, with the smooth, round features, delicate eyebrows, and moustache of a Moghul miniature. His nature was sombre and brooding, but he spoke with breath-taking frankness. Next morning in the course of conversation Riddle enquired after the health of his relatives and asked:

"How is your cousin, Selim?"

"The dead one?" Ramadan queried.

"Forgive me," Riddle said, "I didn't know that he had died."

"Well, he's not dead yet," came the reply, "but the doctors say that there is little hope, so we call him 'the Dead One' and are dividing up his property!"

His words sounded blatantly cynical, but they were not meant to shock, and it struck me at the time that they were symbolic of the attitude of the Albanians towards the problems of the war. In their eyes the Germans, like Selim, were "dead", because past hope of recovery; and the approaching

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

road two loaded donkeys might meet and pass, but two loaded horses could not. When these met, one or the other had to step aside from the road, turning back, if need be to find a suitable place in which to do so. This was almost invariably of nature's making; there were no artificial passing places as on narrow motor roads in England.

Load generally determined priority of passage. To use Albanian phraseology, when a riding-saddle met a riding-saddle on a horse-track the one with no saddle-bags or other load besides the rider had to turn back. The riding-saddle had to make way for the loaded pack-saddle, but had priority over an empty one. When two pack-saddles met, the one loaded and the other empty, the latter had to make way for the former. When they were both loaded or both empty, the one which was nearer a possible place at which to step off the road had to turn back. The same rules applied to carts. In the rare cases where there was plenty of room for two loaded horses or carts, there was no 'Keep right' or 'Keep left'; they could pass on whichever side they wished.

The rules about priority were apt to be honoured in the breach rather than the observance. A man who was turned back on his road felt, even if priority was not his, as much disgraced as if his gun had been taken from him. His honour was lost, and could not be redeemed unless he killed his rival. There have been many deaths for the sake of precedence. The men of Godolesh, who were satisfied when the offender was fined by the elders, were condemned by their neighbours as soft and citified. But even in Godolesh there was no more fertile cause of murder than disputes about who should have the right of way. The trouble arose because priority rules were often confused, especially on purpose by strong wilful men, with the general law of road ownership. As enunciated by Father Gjeçov, this law said that a village street or a public highway was nobody's individual perquisite, but belonged to one man as much as to another. Hence, the living and the dead—traveller and live-stock, bride and corpse—had an absolute right to use either, and no man, even if the road passed close to the door of his house, could deny this right.

A road was free to all. It was for breaking this general law that highway robbery was punished so much more severely than other forms of theft, and that a traveller who killed a dangerous dog on a highway did not have to compensate its owner.

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

everyone else did, and they would only have been laughed at if they had refrained. As the proverb says, 'One bunch of grapes, seeing another ripening, then ripens itself'. Then there were incidental offenders: a man who could not recover a debt might distrain on his debtor by turning highwayman and seizing his pack-pony or sheep on the public road; or men might steal out of spite. The debt recovered or the spite vented, such thieves usually became law-abiding citizens again. Though poverty is, and always has been, extreme in this mountainous land, hunger rarely made a man steal. Few broke into a house to help themselves because of the risks involved. Many, however, would catch a lamb or kid on the mountain where the risks were less and, after killing it, make a cooking-vessel of its paunch and boil the meat over a gipsy fire. Sheep stealing often took place on a grand scale between family and family, village and village or tribe and tribe. There are many popular tales of forays for fun or glory. 'Ragging' the other house, village or tribe and, more especially, the hated Serbs and Montenegrins, was a recognized sport, and the bigger the booty the greater the glory. There was a picnic atmosphere about such expeditions. A hundred men might go, half to drive the sheep and half to take pot-shots at pursuers. As soon as the first party found the flock they killed the bell-wether and cut off its head. One of them held this out, bell and all, to the other sheep and ran off at top speed. As the sheep galloped helter-skelter after the head, the rest of the party ran hither and thither shouting and cursing, laughing and beating the sheep with sticks to make them run faster. Being pressed for time, they left the leader's carcass on the ground. They usually disarmed the shepherd and carried him off to prevent his giving the alarm. On releasing him they gave him what they pleased.

On the whole there was little shame about individual and group thieving, although there were many expressions of disapproval. The men of Lumë had a saying, 'Better be a good-for-nothing than a thief', which was in direct contradiction to their reputation. The Malesors asserted that all other tribes were thieves, but that they themselves never stole. The Catholics of Kthellë used to say that it was better not to sleep too softly like the Moslems of Mat, whose oxen had often been driven away, killed and eaten before they got out of their beds. The man who stole because he had been stolen from evoked universal admiration. There were, however, two forms